



Christian Ethos Policy

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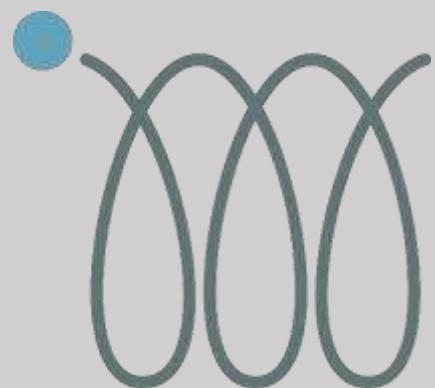
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Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Purpose and Scope	2
3. Vision and Values	3
4. Christian Ethos in Schools	3
5. Christian Perspectives and Vision	3
6. Delivery of Educational Activities	4
7. Christian Perspectives in Education	4
8. Recruitment and Staff Expectations	5
9. Safeguarding and Compliance	5
10. Transparency and Review	5
11. APPENDIX A	6

1. Introduction

Grace Foundation partners with schools to support holistic education, ensuring students' emotional, relational, and aspirational needs are met. Our Christian ethos underpins this work, promoting values that align with national education standards while fostering respect and inclusion for all. We work collaboratively with schools to embed an ethos that enhances personal development, character formation, and well-being.

Grace Foundation actively partners with people of all faiths and none, making it clear to staff, students, and families that anyone can benefit from our work, and no one will be excluded from participation. While our ethos is rooted in Christian principles, we are committed to being inclusive in our approach, ensuring that all students, regardless of background or belief, can engage with and benefit from the values we promote.

2. Purpose and Scope

This policy ensures that our Christian Ethos Programme operates with clarity and alignment to:

- Grace Foundation's core values and Christian ethos.
- Schools' educational priorities and the national curriculum.
- Ofsted and SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural) requirements.

It applies to:

- Ethos Team staff in partner schools.
- The delivery of lessons, interventions, and enrichment activities.
- External partners working on behalf of Grace Foundation.

3. Vision and Values

Our vision is to transform young people's lives from the inside out, embedding a Christian ethos within education. We believe that every individual has intrinsic value and purpose, inspired by the example of Jesus.

Our Core Values:

- **Respect** – Treating all with dignity and kindness. (1 John 3:18)
- **Commitment** – Serving with excellence and integrity. (Matthew 5:16)
- **Togetherness** – Building a strong community. (Philippians 2:2)
- **Integrity** – Acting with honesty and moral courage. (Titus 2:7)

We provide opportunities for students to engage with Christian perspectives in a way that is educational, reflective, and respectful, ensuring all students can participate, regardless of belief.

4. Christian Ethos in Schools

Our work is structured around three core themes:

1. **Developing Character & Values (DCV)** – Our goal is to help students develop character and values by raising aspirations, building resilience, cultivating respect and supporting well-being.
2. **Building Healthy Relationships (BHR)** – Our goal is to help students build healthy relationships by growing self-worth, shaping relationship values and developing relationship skills.
3. **Understanding Christian Perspectives (UCP)** – Our goal is to help students understand Christian perspectives by examining key beliefs, exploring faith questions and making a difference.

We use the DECA framework (Discover, Explore, Connect, Apply) to facilitate student reflection rather than persuasion.

5. Christian Perspectives and Vision

Our Christian ethos is rooted in the belief that every individual is made in the image of God and is valued unconditionally. We aim to create spaces where students can explore key life questions and understand how Christian faith contributes to values, purpose, and personal transformation.

We focus on three key learning outcomes:

- **Examining Key Beliefs** – Exploring foundational Christian beliefs, including the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- **Exploring Faith Questions** – Engaging with big questions such as faith and science, the problem of suffering, morality, and the role of spirituality in modern life.
- **Making a Difference** – Understanding how faith leads to positive action, including social justice, community service, and personal integrity.

Through our ethos work, students are encouraged to think critically, engage in discussions, and develop a broader understanding of how faith influences society and personal values. The emphasis is always on education rather than persuasion, fostering an environment where students can reflect and form their own perspectives.

While our approach is distinctively Christian, we welcome all students and staff to engage in discussions and activities without exclusion or coercion.

6. Delivery of Educational Activities

Our Ethos Programme aligns with Ofsted expectations and ensures that:

- All students can access activities without discrimination.
- Content is age-appropriate, student-centred, and aligned with the national curriculum.
- Schools have full access to review materials, ensuring transparency.
- Staff facilitate discussions that encourage reflection, not persuasion.
- Enrichment clubs and reflection spaces are inclusive, values-based, and voluntary.

We embed our Christian ethos within whole-school life through:

- **Curriculum Integration** – Supporting RE, PSHE, SMSC, and Citizenship education.
- **Ethos Moments** – Values-based reflections in lessons, 1-1 and group interventions, and assemblies/tutor time.
- **Enrichment** – providing faith-based reflection opportunities in appropriate contexts.
- **Community Engagement** – Social action projects and family/community activities.

Staff will work with agreed Christian organisations, churches, and community groups to provide students with opportunities for personal development and faith exploration, ensuring all signposting aligns with safeguarding policies and school guidelines. Organisations can be found on our Preferred Partner List available upon request which is reviewed annually. Local churches and community groups are agreed with each partner school.

7. Christian Perspectives in Education

When discussing Christian viewpoints on ethics and life issues through the work of Grace Foundation:

- Staff use neutral, inquiry-based language (e.g., "Christians believe...").
- Personal opinions are not imposed; multiple perspectives are acknowledged.
- Sensitive topics are handled pastorally, with a focus on student reflection.
- Schools have an overview of all material and plans, ensuring consistency and compliance.

Our ethos teams also provide pastoral support helping students explore faith and life questions in a safe and non-judgmental environment.

See Appendix A: Christian Ethos Education: Best Practices for Staff for further guidance.

8. Recruitment and Staff Expectations

As a faith-based charity, we require all our roles to be held by practising Christians under the Genuine Occupational Requirement (GOR) in line with the Equality Act 2010. Staff in these roles must:

- Demonstrate active Christian faith and uphold our mission and values.
- Engage in ethos activities such as prayer and team reflections.
- Deliver Christian perspectives in a way that is educational and inclusive.

All staff are expected to uphold and respect the values of Grace Foundation and contribute positively to the school environment.

9. Safeguarding and Compliance

- All activities align with school safeguarding policies and national guidelines.
- Staff are trained to handle discussions sensitively and professionally.
- Our work contributes to Ofsted priorities on Personal Development, SMSC, and British Values.

10. Transparency and Review

- Schools can review and observe all sessions to ensure alignment.
- Regular training and quality assurance maintain educational integrity.
- This policy will be reviewed biennially to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness.

By embedding Christian ethos in education with excellence, integrity, and inclusivity, we aim to equip young people with the character, values, and skills they need to thrive in life.

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11. APPENDIX A:

Christian Ethos Education: Best Practices for Staff

1. Introduction

This document provides guidance for staff delivering the Christian Ethos Programme within Grace Foundation partner schools. It sets out best practices for facilitating discussions, handling sensitive topics, and ensuring that all activities are educational, inclusive, and transparent.

2. Core Principles

- Education, not persuasion – our role is to provide a space for students to explore Christian perspectives, not to impose beliefs.
- Respect and inclusivity – we welcome students from all backgrounds and create an environment where all feel valued.
- Transparency – schools and students should always be aware of what is being taught and how Christian perspectives are being presented.
- Professionalism and sensitivity – staff should approach discussions with wisdom, ensuring students are supported appropriately.
- Safeguarding First – any discussions, particularly around personal faith, must align with safeguarding procedures and national guidance.

3. Best Practices for Delivering the Christian Ethos Programme

a. Keeping to ethos themes, not personal opinions

- Focus on the three core themes: Developing Character & Values (DCV), Building Healthy Relationships (BHR), and Understanding Christian Perspectives (UCP).
- Use neutral, inquiry-based language (e.g., “Christians believe...” rather than “I believe...”).
- Acknowledge that there are different viewpoints within Christianity and wider society.
- Avoid doctrinal debates or sharing personal theological preferences or styles of worship.

b. Handling conversations wisely

- Encourage critical thinking and respectful discussion.
- If students ask challenging or sensitive questions, acknowledge their curiosity and encourage balanced discussion by creating a safe space for reflection. Respond in a way that facilitates exploration rather than providing a definitive answer, such as, “That’s an interesting question. There are different perspectives on this—let’s consider some of them.”
- Signpost students to appropriate resources for further exploration rather than giving personal answers.
- Ensure discussions align with the school’s safeguarding policies.
- Be aware of how discussions might affect vulnerable students and take appropriate pastoral steps where necessary.
- Grace Foundation actively works to prevent radicalisation by promoting a balanced and inclusive educational environment. Our Christian Ethos Programme encourages critical thinking, respectful dialogue, and the exploration of diverse perspectives, ensuring students develop resilience against

extremist narratives. We align with school safeguarding policies and the Prevent Duty, fostering an ethos of respect, integrity, and personal reflection.

c. Transparency in content and delivery

- Schools should have access to all materials and be informed about session content in advance.
- Be clear about the educational purpose of each session and how it aligns with the curriculum.

d. Creating a safe and inclusive environment

- Reinforce that participation in discussions and activities is voluntary and non-judgmental.
- Encourage students to share their thoughts but never pressure them to agree.
- Maintain a pastoral approach—be a listener first and ensure students feel heard.

4. Guidelines for Discussing Christian Perspectives

a. Examining key beliefs

- Present foundational Christian beliefs, such as Jesus' teachings, the concept of grace, and Christian approaches to purpose and morality.
- Avoid pushing denominational distinctions or specific theological interpretations.

b. Exploring faith questions

- Address big questions thoughtfully (e.g., "Why do bad things happen?", "Is there a purpose to life?").
- Encourage students to consider a range of perspectives.
- Frame discussions as an exploration of ideas, not an attempt to convince.

c. Making a difference

- Showcase how Christian values inspire action in areas such as social justice, compassion, and ethical leadership.
- Highlight historical and contemporary examples of Christians making a positive impact.
- Reinforce the idea that values such as kindness, integrity, and respect are universal.

5. Handling Sensitive Topics and Safeguarding

- Be aware of the school context and avoid discussing controversial or politicised topics in a way that could alienate students.
- When discussing relationships and values, ensure content aligns with school policies and RSHE (Relationships, Sex, and Health Education) guidance.
- Always use non-judgmental language and avoid making students feel scrutinised for their personal views.
- Follow the school's safeguarding procedures when handling any disclosures or sensitive discussions.

6. Signposting to Churches and Further Exploration of Faith

- If a student expresses an interest in actively pursuing faith, offer general signposting to local churches or faith groups, ensuring that these are appropriate and aligned with safeguarding standards.
- Reinforce that faith is a personal journey, and no pressure should ever be placed on a student to attend faith-based activities.
- Work with the school to ensure any signposting is transparent, voluntary, and age appropriate.

7. Supporting Spiritual Reflection in Schools

- Where collective worship takes place in schools led by the Ethos Team, it should follow national and local guidelines, ensuring that students can opt in or out based on their personal beliefs.
- Staff should work in line with guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) which states that religious expression in schools, including prayer, should be voluntary, student-led, and inclusive. Schools can provide space for reflection but not enforce participation.
- If students request guidance on how to pray, staff may signpost to Christian resources in an educational capacity, ensuring that no pressure is placed on participation.

8. Staff Conduct and Professional Boundaries

- Model the values of Respect, Commitment, Togetherness, and Integrity in all interactions.
- Be mindful of boundaries - students may seek guidance, but we must remain professional and signpost to appropriate pastoral support or community partners where necessary.
- Engage with parents and school staff in a way that builds trust and strengthens partnerships.

9. Ensuring Alignment with School Expectations

- Regularly liaise with school leadership to ensure ethos work supports their priorities.
- Follow school policies and national guidelines when delivering faith-based discussions.
- Participate in regular training and quality assurance to maintain high standards.

10. Conclusion

By following these guidelines, staff can ensure that Grace Foundation's Christian Ethos Programme is delivered with integrity, professionalism, and inclusivity. Our goal is to equip students with the tools to explore faith, values, and character in a way that enriches their education and personal growth.